

Mass Series #6 - Liturgy of the Eucharist

Communion Rite Part 2

The purpose of the **Communion Chant** (hymn) is “to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the ‘communitarian’ character of the procession to receive the Eucharist”. The Communion Chant (or song) should begin as the priest receives Communion. The music unites his Communion with that of the entire assembly.

Communion is the climax of the Mass. The Eucharist is the summit, the greatest experience of our life, and it is the source, the origin of our all we do and are. It calls forth our belief in God and our service to the world. As Catholics, we believe that the Communion we share is the sacramental presence of Jesus, and that Christ remains with us as we go forth to love our neighbor. At God’s invitation, we come to this table with joy, faith, and reverence. As a sign of the reverence we owe this Sacrament, each of us bows our head before we receive.

The vessels used for the distribution of Communion at Mass are to be purified. **Purification** involves gathering and consuming the remaining fragments and droplets of the Body and Blood of Christ. Today it is more common to use only water to purify the vessels. When the priest purifies the vessels after Communion, he says a particular prayer quietly. It is one of the parts of the Mass that is not to be spoken aloud, so it concerns the priest more than the people, but it serves as a reminder of the holiness of the Communion that everyone shares. The text goes like this: “What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity.”

In the **Prayer after Communion** the celebrant prays that the fruits of the mysteries which we have celebrated may take effect in our daily lives, especially the fruit of keeping our eyes on Jesus as we live as His disciples.

Concluding Rites

The Mass ends as it began, under the sign of the cross. Then the faithful are sent forth to put the Mass into action. Liturgical prayer is common prayer. Singing the songs, making the responses, observing common silences, and sharing the Sign of Peace all bind us in communion long before we share bread and cup. Communion is communion not just with God, but also with one another. Those who leave early essentially say they’ve come to take care of themselves, but they shirk their community responsibility. The final Dismissal sends us off together so we never have to proclaim the Gospel alone. We are dismissed together, and together we bring Christ to the world.